

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 171646

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TAGS: OEXC, UR

SUBJECT: GS/YF EXCHANGE -- IREX LETTER RE US SCHOLARS
ACCESS

ASSUMING THE EMBASSY HAS NO OBJECTIONS, IT SHOULD DELIVER
FOLLOWING LETTER, FROM IREX DIRECTOR ALLEN KASSOF TO
LEV BORISOVICH BAZHANOV, FOREIGN RELATIONS DEPT, MHE, 11
ZHDANOV STREET, MOSCOW, USSR.

"DEAR LEV BORISOVICH:

I AM SORRY THAT I COULD NOT JOIN DANIEL MATUSZEWSKI DURING
THE APRIL TALKS IN MOSCOW, FOR IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A
PLEASURE TO SEE YOU AGAIN. BUT I DO LOOK FORWARD TO A
VISIT TO MOSCOW SOMETIME DURING THE COMING ACADEMIC YEAR.

THE MAJORITY OF PLACEMENTS OF THE AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS
FOR 1976-1977 WERE, OF COURSE, MOST SATISFACTORY AND I
WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES FOR THE
TROUBLE YOU TOOK IN ARRANGING THEM. AT THE SAME TIME, AS
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 171646

YOU KNOW FROM THE APRIL TALKS, A NUMBER OF OUR PARTICI-

PANTS WERE ACCEPTED WITHOUT REASONABLE ASSURANCE OF ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL RESEARCH MATERIALS OR OF KOMANDIROVKI WHICH SOME OF THEM WILL NEED TO CONDUCT THEIR WORK PROPERLY.

ALTHOUGH A FEW IMPROVEMENTS WERE MADE IN THE MEANTIME, MANY OF THE PARTICIPANTS STILL FACE THIS UNCERTAINTY.

I AM WRITING TO YOU NOW TO EXPRESS MY CONCERN OVER THIS DEVELOPMENT, FOR I BELIEVE THAT THE EXPERIENCE OF ALL THE MEMBERS OF OUR 1976-1977 GROUP WILL HAVE SIGNIFICANT CONSEQUENCES FOR THE FUTURE CONDUCT OF OUR EXCHANGE PROGRAMS. IN THE INTEREST OF CONTINUING OUR COOPERATION AT AN UNDIMINISHED LEVEL, WE HAVE DECIDED TO ACCEPT ALMOST ALL OF THE PLACEMENTS OFFERED DESPITE THE INADEQUACIES THAT CHARACTERIZE SOME OF THEM. (THE ALTERNATIVE, WHICH WE CONSIDERED, WAS TO SEND ONLY THOSE WHOSE WORKING CONDITIONS HAD ALREADY BEEN ASSURED, BUT THAT WOULD HAVE REDUCED THE EXCHANGE BY ALMOST FIFTEEN PLACES FOR THE COMING YEAR; INSTEAD WE DECIDED TO GO AHEAD IN THE HOPE THAT THE FURTHER DETAILS OF THEIR RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES WOULD BE WORKED OUT SATISFACTORILY AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL IN THE USSR.)

IN EVALUATING THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS SITUATION, PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT SOVIET PARTICIPANTS WORKING HERE ASK FOR, AND RECEIVE, EXTENSIVE ACCESS TO LABORATORIES AND LIBRARIES, AND THAT THEIR ADVISORS GIVE FREELY OF THEIR TIME. NATURALLY, NO PROGRAM IS EVER TOTALLY EFFICIENT, AND YET I THINK IT CAN BE SAID CONFIDENTLY THAT SOVIET VISITORS HERE ENJOY EXCEPTIONALLY FAVORABLE WORKING CONDITIONS.

OVER THE YEARS SINCE THE EXCHANGES BEGAN, BUT ESPECIALLY WITHIN THE LAST YEAR, A CLIMATE OF OPINION HAS DEVELOPED AMONG SOME FORMER PARTICIPANTS IN THE IREX EXCHANGE AND AMONG THE PUBLIC GENERALLY THAT THE PRINCIPLES OF RECIPROCITY ARE INADEQUATELY OBSERVED IN OUR EXCHANGES: THAT IS, THAT AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS IN THE USSR ARE OFTEN IMPEDED IN THEIR WORK BY ARBITRARY EXCLUSION FROM ARCHIVAL AND OTHER RESOURCES, THAT THEIR ADVISORS SOMETIMES PLACE UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 171646

OBSTRUCTIONS IN THE PATH OF THEIR WORK, AND THAT THEY EXPERIENCE GREAT DIFFICULTIES WITH RESPECT TO SUCH PRACTICAL, BUT IMPORTANT, MATTERS AS OBTAINING MICROFILMS AND OTHER RESEARCH AIDS. TO SOME EXTENT THIS OPINION IS EXAGGERATED IN ITS FAILURE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE FACT THAT THE MAJORITY OF AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS ARE WARMLY RECEIVED, THAT THEY PROFIT GREATLY FROM THE OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY THEIR SOVIET HOSTS, AND THAT THEY ESSENTIALLY

ACCOMPLISH THE RESEARCH WHICH THEY SET OUT TO DO. IREX CAN, AND DOES, ATTEMPT TO REMIND THE CRITICS OF THIS PROGRAM OF THE NEED TO MAINTAIN AN ACCURATE AND BALANCED PERSPECTIVE WHICH EMPHASIZES THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EXCHANGES, AS WELL AS ITS PROBLEMS.

AT THE SAME TIME, THERE IS NO GETTING AROUND THE FACT THAT THE DISSATISFACTIONS WITH THE CONDUCT OF THE EXCHANGES ARE BASED ON UNDENIABLE AND REAL PROBLEMS AND THAT THEY MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR IREX TO DEFEND THIS RECORD WHEN A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS COME HOME AT THE END OF THE YEAR, FRUSTRATED AND DISAPPOINTED OVER THEIR FAILURE TO ACCOMPLISH REASONABLE GOALS DURING THEIR SOJOURN IN THE USSR. OF COURSE I AM NOT REFERRING TO LIMITATIONS WHICH MAY BE OF AN ENTIRELY INDIVIDUAL NATURE--WE BOTH KNOW THAT EACH YEAR A SMALL HANDFUL BOTH OF SOVIET AND AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS WILL EXPERIENCE SOME PROBLEMS BECAUSE OF INSUFFICIENT ENERGY, LANGUAGE PROBLEMS, AND SO ON. RATHER, I HAVE IN MIND CASES WHERE AN AMERICAN IS ADMITTED BY THE MINISTRY FOR WORK IN THE USSR, AND THEN DENIED THE REAL POSSIBILITY OF CARRYING OUT HIS RESEARCH. IT IS AS THOUGH WE WERE TO ACCEPT A SOVIET PARTICIPANT AT A CERTAIN UNIVERSITY HERE, AND THEN FORBID HIM FROM ENTERING THE LIBRARY OR LABORATORY.

I RAISE THIS PROBLEM NOW BECAUSE WE ARE SOON TO ENTER TALKS FOR A RENEWAL OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL EXCHANGES AGREEMENT, IN WHICH THE EVALUATION OF CURRENT EXPERIENCES WILL PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN DETERMINING THE VOLUME AND TYPE OF OUR EXCHANGE RELATIONSHIP FOR SOME YEARS TO COME; IT WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT ON OUR SIDE TO ARGUE FOR AN UNDIMINISHED CONTINUATION, AND TO FIND THE FUNDS TO SUPPORT THIS IMPORTANT WORK, IF THERE IS WIDESPREAD DIS-SATISFACTION OVER THE EXPERIENCES OF THE PARTICIPANTS.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 171646

IREX WILL, OF COURSE, CONTINUE TO DEFEND ITS PROGRAM WITH THE MINISTRY AS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF US-USSR CONTACTS AND RELATIONS, BUT OUR CASE WILL NOT BE MADE EASIER IF THE SKEPTICS AND CRITICS ARE IN A POSITION TO POINT TO SERIOUS SHORTCOMINGS. HERE, OF COURSE, THE OUTCOME IS QUITE BEYOND OUR DIRECT CONTROL, SINCE IT DEPENDS FIRST OF ALL ON THE POLICIES OF YOUR MINISTRY AND OF THE SOVIET HOST UNIVERSITIES AND ADVISORS.

I WOULD THEREFORE LIKE TO EXPRESS THE URGENT HOPE THAT THE INADEQUACIES IN THE PLACEMENTS OF MANY OF OUR PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE THE PROMPT AND EFFICIENT ATTENTION OF THE MINISTRY, AND THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO WORK OUT SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS WHEN OUR PEOPLE HAVE ARRIVED TO TAKE UP THEIR RESEARCH.

INDEED, SO AS TO ENCOURAGE AS MANY AS POSSIBLE OF OUR PARTICIPANTS TO ACCEPT THEIR APPOINTMENTS DESPITE THE INADEQUACIES OF SOME OF THE PLACEMENTS (IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE THE SIZE OF THE EXCHANGE), WE HAVE HAD TO ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO TERMINATE THEIR PARTICIPATION IF THEY ARE UNABLE TO ATTAIN REASONABLE GOALS. THAT, IN TURN, WOULD OBLIGE US TO SUPPORT THEM FINANCIALLY AFTER THEIR RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES, AND WOULD EXHAUST THE BUDGET RESERVED FOR THE USE OF AN EQUIVALENT NUMBER OF SOVIET PARTICIPANTS HERE. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT, WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE MINISTRY, WE SHALL BE ABLE TO AVOID SUCH A PROSPECT, AND THAT OUR PROGRAMS OF EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AND FLOURISH.

AGAIN, LET ME EXPRESS MY THANKS FOR YOUR EFFORTS IN OUR JOINT UNDERTAKING.

SINCERELY YOURS, ALLEN H. KASSOF" KISSINGER

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